

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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TAGS: WHO

SUBJECT: REPORT ON EB PROGRAM COMMITTEE, WHO, NOVEMBER 1-6

DEPT ALSO PASS TO DR EHRLICH, OIH/DHEW

REF: A) GENEVA 8180, B) GENEVA 8513, C) GENEVA 8542,

D) GENEVA 8553, E) GENEVA 8556

1. SUMMARY. WHO'S REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER MEETING OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD PROGRAM COMMITTEE, ON WHICH MISSION HAD FULLY EXPECTED TO COMMENT EARLIER, HAS BEEN UNACCOUNTABLY DELAYED AND IS NOW PROMISED FOR EARLY DECEMBER. MISSION IS PROCEEDING WITH ITS OWN ANALYSIS AND WILL ALSO REACT TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT WHEN IT APPEARS NEXT MONTH. THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING (REFTEL A) WAS PRIMARILY TO CONSIDER A "POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION" BY DG MAHLER AS HIS ANSWER TO WHA RESOLUTION 29.48. MAJOR PORTIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT (PC/EB59/WP/2) HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED IN REFTELS A-E. IN GENERAL, THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE ACCEPTED THE PROPOSED MAHLER STRATEGY AS A BLUEPRINT FOR WHO'S FUTURE, NOTWITHSTANDING FREQUENT OPPOSITION FROM THE CONSERVATIVE SOVIET MEMBER, WHOSE INTERVENTIONS,

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NONETHELESS, OFTEN FORCED SECRETARIAT CLARIFICATION OF

PROGRAM AND BUDGET ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. MISSION CABLES FOLLOW ON GENERAL REACTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE TO MAHLER'S PROPOSALS AND TO ITS OWN FUTURE WORK, WHICH WE BELIEVE ARE BOUND TO HAVE CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON THE ORGANIZATION AND ON THE CONDUCT OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY NEXT MAY, AND WHICH WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING BY THE DEPARTMENT. ALTHOUGH THE US IS NOT CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER SENDING AN IO AND HEW TEAM TO OBSERVE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION BEGINNING ON JANUARY 12. MISSION ALSO CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT CABLES AND DOCUMENTS ON THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING SHOULD BE OF INTEREST TO THE GAO TEAM THAT RECENTLY VISITED GENEVA.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE 9-MEMBER PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORTED IN REFTEL A (GUATEMALA AND PAKISTAN FAILED TO ATTEND), EB MEMBERS SIR HAROLD WALTER (MAURITIUS) AND DR KILGOUR (UK) PARTICIPATED THROUGHOUT. DR VALLADARES WAS APPOINTED CHAIRMAN, PROFESSOR AUJALEU (FRANCE) VICE CHAIRMAN (NO RAPPORTEUR). ALTHOUGH THE DIPLOMATIC GALLERY WAS OPENED AT THE LAST MINUTE, THE ONLY GENEVA GROUP OBSERVERS WHO ATTENDED WERE CANADA, FRG AND THE US. WHO REGIONAL DIRECTORS KAPRIO (EURO) AND TABA (EMRO) PARTICIPATED; MAJOR WHO SECRETARIAT PARTICIPANTS WERE DG MAHLER, DDG LAMBO, DR. COHEN, DR. BERNARD, MR. FURTH. EXCEPT FOR FURTH'S BUDGET PRESENTATIONS, THE WEEK-LONG MEETING WAS GENERALLY, ON THE WHO SIDE, A ONE-MAN SHOW (MAHLER) -- AND FREQUENTLY SO ON THE COMMITTEE AIDE (DR. VENEDICTOV, USSR).

4. MISSION METHOD OF REPORTING IS TO SUMMARIZE WHAT WE BELIEVE THE COMMITTEE WILL RECOMMEND TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD IN ITS DECEMBER REPORT, WHICH BREAKS DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

- 1) MAHLER'S POLICY AND STRATEGY PAPER;
 - 2) IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING TECHNICAL COOPERATION;
 - 3) NEW TRENDS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION;
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- 4) REDUCING WHO DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLICATIONS;
- 5) BUDGETARY AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS;
- 6) MAKING WHO AND ITS PROGRAMS BETTER KNOWN;
- 7) REVIEW OF 6TH PROGRAM OF WORK (1978-83);
- 8) FUTURE WORK OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE.

5. POLICY AND STRATEGY PAPER.

MAHLER OPENED THE MEETING BY SAYING THE

POLICY AND STRATEGY PAPER REPRESENTED HIS OWN PERSONAL VIEWS, NOT THOSE OF THE SECRETARIAT WITH WHOM HE HAD YET TO ACHIEVE CONSENSUS. ALTHOUGH RESOLUTION 29.48 CAME TO HIM AS NO SURPRISE, IMPLEMENTING IT WILL INVOLVE PAINFUL REDUCTIONS IN STAFF AT HEADQUARTERS AND POSE OTHER CHALLENGES NOT NOW BEING FACED BY ANY OTHER UN AGENCY OF WHICH HE IS AWARE. THE AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE SET A SERIOUS TONE FOR THE MEETING BY SAYING THE WORK OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE WOULD HELP DETERMINE THE LIFE OF THE ORGANIZATION BETWEEN NOW AND THE YEAR 2000. THE SOVIET SET HIS OWN, SOMEWHAT PUGNACIOUS TONE, ASKING IF THE MAHLER STRATEGY COULD WITHSTAND THE COMMITTEE'S HAIL OF CROSSFIRE AND NOTING THAT WHO NEEDS A PROGRAM, NOT A PROGRAM.

6. MAHLER REPLIED BY REFERRING TO HIS 1976 WHA ADDRESS ON THE NEED FOR A SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN PUBLIC HEALTH. HE NOTED THAT THE CONCEPT OF HEALTH FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000 HAS RECEIVED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE UN SYSTEM; THAT IT WILL ALSO HELP TO IMPROVE THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE DEVELOPED AS WELL AS DEVELOPING WORLD. HE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE WITH RESOLUTION 29.48 BUT REMINDED MEMBERS THE TREND HAD ALREADY BEEN UNDERWAY IN WHO LONG BEFORE THE LAST WHA; OTHERWISE, WHO WOULD NOW BE ONLY A BENEVOLENT FUND GIVING AWAY MONEY AND EQUIPMENT. HE CONCLUDED BY EMPHASIZING WHO'S CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE AS THE INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING BODY ON HEALTH WHICH GIVES IT ITS RAISON D'ETRE: CATALYZING RAPID IMPROVEMENT OF HEALTH THROUGHOUT ALL 151 MEMBER STATES.

7. MAHLER ASKED THE COMMITTEE TO FOCUS DISCUSSION ON BOTH THE CONCEPTS BEHIND HIS POLICY PAPER AND THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRACTICAL ISSUES INVOLVED IN ORDER TO REACH CONSENSUS ON BOTH. HE IS CONVINCED WHAT HE PROPOSES IS THE BEST WAY TO CARRY OUT WHO'S ROLE FOR THE FUTURE BUT IS PREPARED TO MODIFY THE STRATEGY, SUBJECT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS. NOTWITHSTANDING LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS BY ALL MEMBERS, THE COMMITTEE ENDED UP ENDORSING MAHLER'S OVERALL STRATEGY AND BY AGREEING THAT HIS GENERAL APPROACH REFLECTED FAITHFULLY THE SPIRIT AND INTENT OF THE RESOLUTIONS TO WHICH HE WAS RESPONDING.

8. HOWEVER, ALL MEMBERS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN STAFF, LED OFF BY THE TANZANIAN REPRESENTATIVE WHO CAUTIONED THAT STAFF SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED TOO FAST. THE FRENCH REPRESENTATIVE REMINDED MAHLER THE NORMAL REACTION OF GOVERNMENTS WILL BE, IF

YOU CAN LAY OFF SO MANY PEOPLE NOW, WHY WEREN'T YOU
DING IT EARLIER?

9. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON OTHER TOPICS DESCRIBED IN PARA 4.CATTO

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